

the relations of different parts of the Empire. He hints that in the United Kingdom the desire of the Colonies may be regarded as one unfriendly to Imperial interests; that it would lead to the necessity of adopting a particular course with future commercial treaties; and he says that Her Majesty's Government, "before so serious a step is taken, would ask the Colonists gravely to consider "the probable effects of a measure which might tend materially to affect the relations of the Colonies to "this country and to the rest of the Empire." These apprehensions are disposed of, when it is said that all that is asked is to place the Australasian Colonies in the same position as those of British America. By an accident, probably (because the stipulation is differently worded in the case of New Zealand, and an alteration in the New Zealand Constitution Act is not necessary), words were inserted in the Constitution Acts of some of the Colonies, which prevent those Colonies entering into reciprocal Customs arrangements. Those words require to be altered; and if the alteration were made, the Australasian Colonies would still have less powers than the British American Provinces have exercised for many years. But no momentous consequences have arisen from the powers exercised by the British American Provinces. It is not pretended that the exercise of those powers has retarded the progress of British America, or imperiled or injuriously affected the relations between different parts of the Empire.

The Australasian Colonies ask for nothing new. They desire nothing which is not sanctioned by precedent: they wish only to know why they, more isolated than the British American Provinces, may not be allowed to make those convenient Tariff arrangements which are suitable to their condition as a group of Colonies far distant from other countries and from other parts of the Empire. All that is asked has been granted to Canada: why should a different result follow the application of the Australasian Colonies? It would be intelligible if it were alleged that Great Britain has changed her policy; but why predict consequences that have not arisen in the past? Existing Treaties, it is admitted, interpose no obstacle: why need they, in future? If, as appears to be assumed, it is chance rather than design that has prevented existing Treaties interposing obstacles to the present proposal, surely when the conditions are more clearly understood, it is not likely that mistakes will be made in future Treaties from which accident has saved those of the past.

When Lord Kimberley denies the full application of the British-American precedent, his Lordship, it is submitted, fails to recollect that precisely similar questions of theory were raised in respect of the policy of those Provinces, but that the Imperial Government again and again decided not to allow theoretical objections to override obviously practical considerations. The Colonial Treasurer, in referring to the history of the question, is under the disadvantage of not having access to the whole correspondence, which extended over many years. It seems to have been admitted between the Imperial Government and the British American Governments, that the question of reciprocity was to be considered in two phases, the one as between the different Provinces themselves, and the other as between those Provinces and foreign countries. As far as the Colonial Treasurer is able to ascertain, theoretical objections were from time to time urged against the operation of reciprocal agreements, whilst the warmest possible assistance was rendered in order to bring them about. The Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade were in the habit of reporting, in more or less decided terms, against such arrangements; the Canadian Government replied to the objections; and the Imperial Government accepted the Canadian view, sometimes warmly, sometimes under a species of protest. In 1850, the Canadian Legislature passed an Act empowering the Governor in Council to admit into Canada, free of duty, the products of any of the British American possessions. The then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, though he called attention to its provisions, did not disallow it. Various Acts of the same nature were passed, until, in 1860, it was proposed to much extend the conditions of interchange. The Board of Trade interposed an objection; the Finance Minister of Canada replied, in a report which was adopted by the Executive Council of Canada; and after some consideration, the Duke of Newcastle intimated that Her Majesty's Government had no wish to offer "an obstacle "to any endeavour which might be made by the respective Provincial Governments to bring about a free "commercial intercourse between the North American Provinces." Nearly seven years afterwards, on the occasion of a similar Act being again passed, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos sent out another remonstrance from the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, to which another rejoinder was made; and no further objection appears to have been offered. A similar controversy was proceeding during the same period, concerning the principle of reciprocal arrangements between the Provinces and the United States. In this case, also, theoretical objections were from time to time stated—it could be hardly said they were urged; but, on the other hand, the warmest aid was given towards effecting such arrangements. The Colonial Treasurer appends a Report of Sir John Rose, Minister of Finance of the Dominion, which, although marked confidential, has already elsewhere been published, in which that gentleman traces the history of the question as between the Imperial and Provincial Governments. It appears by that document, that so long ago as 1849, Lord Palmerston instructed Sir Henry Bulwer, "that Her Majesty's Government regard it as of the very highest importance, both commercially and politically, that free admission to the market of the United States should be obtained "for those articles which are enumerated in an Act passed in the last Session of the Canadian Parliament, of which I enclose a copy for your information." The anxiety of the Imperial Government to arrange the Reciprocity Treaty with America is a matter of history, as is also the regret which was felt at its abrogation. When it became known that the Reciprocity Treaty was to be abrogated, the Confederate Council of Trade held a meeting at Quebec, in September, 1865, at which the following resolution was passed:—"That, in the opinion of this Council, it would be highly desirable that application "be made to Her Majesty's Imperial Government, requesting that steps be taken to enable the British "North American Provinces to open communications with the West India Islands, with Spain and her "Colonies, and with Brazil and Mexico, for the purpose of ascertaining in what manner the traffic of the "Provinces with these countries could be extended, and placed on a more advantageous footing." The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Cardwell, cordially approved the suggestion, and promised that Her Majesty's Government would "support it by all the means in their power." Even the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade expressed their approval of the proposed step, although, as was to be anticipated, they drew attention to possible difficulties that might arise from it. The